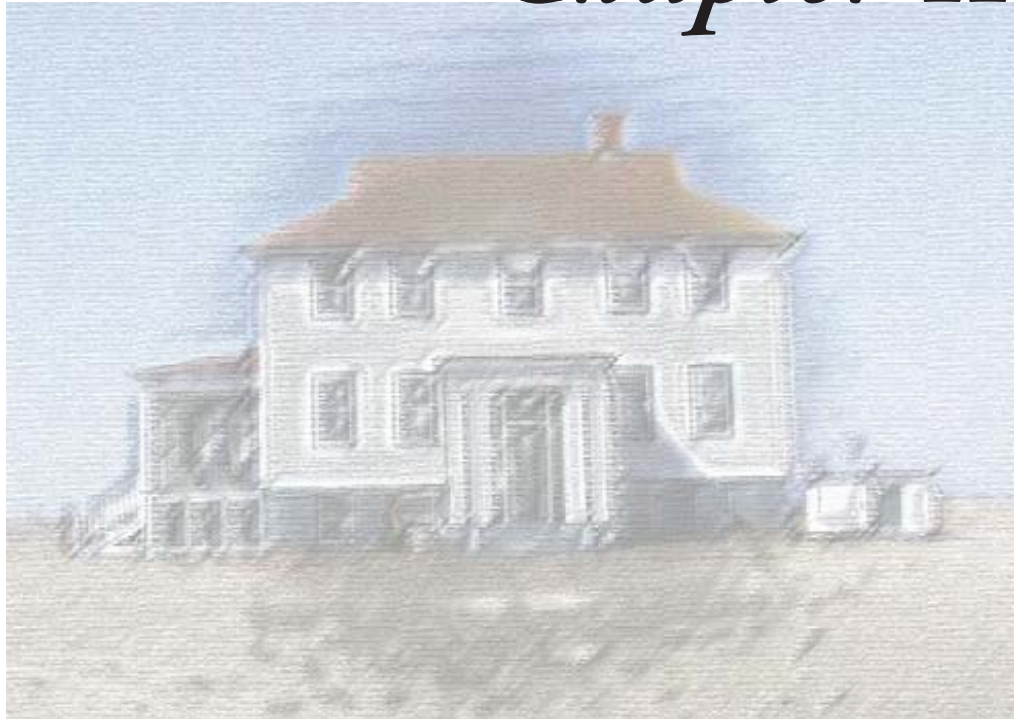


Chapter II



13

Alternatives

Alternative A: No-action
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Alternative C: Relocation

Alternative D: Demolition

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Summary of Alternatives Dismissed from Further

Consideration

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II. Alternatives

A. Alternative A: No-action

Maintain current management practices of stabilization and minimal rehabilitation with occasional short-term active use such as housing for visiting researchers and as storage.

The “no action” alternative sets a baseline of existing actions and conditions continued into the future against which to compare actions and impacts of other alternatives. This alternative would maintain all current management practices and levels of treatment for the resources. Under this alternative all structures would be maintained as they are considered part of one historic complex or system, however should resources need to be prioritized, the Station house and boathouse would take precedence over the garage and tower.

Current management practices include stabilizing the structures and conducting repair or rehabilitation projects as funds become available. The availability of funding would continue to be inconsistent and scarce as other park resources which are used more regularly get priority.

Under this alternative, the Station house would continue to be used on occasion for temporary lodging for visiting scientists and cooperators; the garage for storage; and the boathouse would remain vacant. The generator house and the lookout tower would also remain in their current conditions. NASA would continue using the tower and other Station facilities to house equipment used in scientific projects.

The park would continue to use its limited park resources for basic resource maintenance and stabilization and would not pursue partnerships for rehabilitation or adaptive use.

B. Alternative B: Rehabilitation for Adaptive Use: Preferred and Environmentally Preferred

Rehabilitate to accommodate a range of uses that fall under environmental research and education.

This alternative would permit rehabilitation of the structures for use as research and/or education facilities. The park and/or its partners would use the structures for programs that focus on environmental education and ecological study as well as interpretation of the Station complex as a historic resource. The rehabilitation would maintain the short-term overnight accommodations of the no-action alternative.

The external appearance and condition of all structures would be maintained over time to protect the architectural and landscape values that contribute to the Station’s significance and eligibility for the National Register. Structure interiors have been determined to be less important to the Station’s significance, and may be modified to support future adaptive uses. Any interior modifications would be conducted using the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for historic structures. Adaptations could consist of additional sleeping quarters, classroom space, meeting space, and a small office.



Wharf, off of Boat House.



The Station House.

This alternative would continue existing protections for piping plover and other breeding shorebirds by restricting access to the Station during the nesting season. Boat access would be the predominate method of reaching the Station between March and September. Future visitors would be educated regarding how they use and move about the site to avoid disrupting sensitive species.

This alternative would seek active partnerships with non-governmental research and education-oriented groups and institutions focusing on science, the environment and maritime history.



Ranger talks and programs.

C. Alternative C: Relocation

Relocate the Coast Guard Station buildings off of Assateague Island.

This alternative would physically relocate all the structures that comprise the Station complex off of Assateague Island to an appropriate location to be determined by the park, its resource advisors and potential partners for rehabilitation and adaptive use. Potential applications include use of the Station as a museum, community center, education center or similar use that would benefit the community and the historic resource. Ownership of the Station structures would be determined by both the park and potential partner.

This alternative would require that all the structures be removed, without exception, and that the partner work with the park and its advisors to retain as much of the historic layout of the complex as is practicable. Once the structures and supporting infrastructure such as power lines and septic system are removed, the site would be rehabilitated to foster a return to natural conditions.

D. Alternative D: Demolition

Demolish structures, rehabilitate the site and manage as a natural landscape.

This alternative proposes that the structures should be demolished and removed and the site should be rehabilitated and managed as an all-natural landscape. The structures and the site would be photographed and documented. Documentation would become part of the park's archives and be made available for exhibits and research.



Assateague Island National Seashore.

E. The Environmentally Preferred Alternative: Alternative B

The environmentally preferred alternative is the alternative that would best promote the national environmental policy expressed in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (Sec. 101 (b)). This includes alternatives that fulfill the following criteria:

- 1) Fulfill the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations.
- 2) Ensure for all Americans safe, healthful, productive, and esthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings.
- 3) Attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without

degradation, risk to health or safety, or other undesirable and unintended consequences.

- 4) Preserve important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage and maintain, wherever possible, an environment that supports diversity and variety of individual choice.
- 5) Achieve a balance between population and resource use that will permit high standards of living and a wide sharing of life's amenities.
- 6) Enhance the quality of renewable resources and approach the maximum attainable recycling of depletable resources.

Simply put, “this means the alternative that causes the least damage to the biological and physical environment; it also means the alternative which best protects, preserves, and enhances historic, cultural, and natural resources” (CEQ NEPA’s 40 Most Asked Questions).

Criterion 1:

Alternatives A and B would meet criterion 1 by maintaining the Station complex in its current condition or rehabilitating the complex for this and future generations, respectively. Alternative C would only partially fulfill this criterion as the complex would be removed from the integral landscape of which it is part. Alternative D would not meet criterion 1 for historic resources as the complex would not be there for this and future generations. All the alternatives would meet criterion 1 in regards to the natural environment which would continue to be protected regardless of how this historic resource is treated.

Criterion 2:

Alternatives A and B would ensure a safe, healthful, productive, and aesthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings—natural and historic—for this and future generations by either maintaining current management practices or rehabilitating the complex for adaptive use, respectively. Alternative B would go further in fulfilling this criterion as the complex would be more accessible to this and future generations. Alternatives C and D would fulfill this criterion for natural but not for historic resources as the Station complex would be removed from its relevant landscape.

Criterion 3:

By rehabilitating the Station complex for adaptive use, Alternative B best meets this criterion of attaining the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment (natural and historic). Alternative B would allow for the adaptive use of the Station complex which would promote environmental education as well as increased accessibility for those interested in visiting the Station for historic research and cultural interest. Alternative A would only meet this criterion minimally as the Station would not be rehabilitated for regular, consistent use and would continue to be used mainly for storage. Alternatives C and D would also not fully meet this criterion as there would be considerable degradation of the original cultural landscape in which the Station is an integral part.

Criterion 4:

Alternative B best meets this criterion to preserve historic, cultural and natural

The environmentally preferred alternative is the alternative that would best promote the national environmental policy expressed in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (Sec. 101 (b))

aspects of our national heritage while also supporting an environment that fosters diversity and variety of individual choice. Adaptive use of the Station would help ensure its rehabilitation—preserving its historic and cultural aspects—through continued use as well as its natural aspects through active educational, research and interpretive programs. Alternative A meets this criterion at a minimal level by maintaining current management practices and preserving the Station, but offers less in terms of individual choice when it comes to the visitor experience. Alternative C removes the resources from their integral setting, destroying the cultural landscape. Alternative D also destroys the cultural landscape and removes the possibility of retaining the resources in any form in any setting for visitation or research.

Criterion 5:

Alternative A meets this criterion—a balance between population and resource use—minimally by preserving the Station and maintaining current management practices. Alternative A provides less resource use than Alternatives B and C. Alternative B provides the greatest balance and opportunity between population and resource use through regular programming and greater opportunities for use and visitation. While Alternative C provides for resource use, the resource's historic integrity would be compromised by its removal from the landscape. Alternative D does not meet this criterion as the resource would not be available for use.

Criterion 6:

The park continues to integrate and incorporate “green” and sustainable management practices throughout the park, this criterion would continue to be applied to Alternatives A and B, but would be irrelevant in Alternatives C and D. Alternative B would afford the park the greatest opportunity to implement this criterion as it could potentially not just be a part of the operations of the research and education center but also a part of the programming itself.

Based on the above analysis, the alternative that best promotes the NEPA criteria and causes the least damage from both an environmental and historical perspective is Alternative B: Rehabilitation for Adaptive Use. Alternative B meets all the NEPA criteria and does so at a level the other alternatives can not meet. Alternative B is the environmentally preferred alternative.



The Station Garage.

Christine Gobrial, NPS.

F. Summary of Alternatives Dismissed from Further Consideration

The following are alternatives (potential adaptive uses) which have been dismissed from further consideration by this EA for the stated reasons:

- **Neglect/Abandonment (leading to ruin and reversion to natural conditions):** abandonment and “benign neglect” of the property is against NPS policy for the treatment of resources eligible to be on the National Register of Historic Places. Furthermore, this treatment would pose serious public and environmental hazards which is also against NPS policies. The ultimate aim of this alternative is to have natural forces overtake the complex of structures so that the site becomes a natural landscape once more. The end objective of this alternative would be achieved in

Alternative D, but through safer, more controlled and quicker means.

- **Eco-Retreat Camp:** use of the site for overnight educational camping groups. The emphasis of this alternative on outside activities and camping creates an unacceptable potential for impacts to breeding piping plover and other sensitive resources.
- **Water Sports:** use of the boat house to support non-motorized boating activities during the summer months. Non-motorized boating is already an acceptable and allowed use and, given the restricted access to the Station during the summer months, would not benefit from use of the site as a launching area.
- **Corporate Retreat:** use of the site for overnight business retreats and corporate functions. This use would not be feasible (financially) for several reasons including being too far away from a major airport and the limited number of rooms and additional bathrooms able to be developed within the structures. Market demand and revenues would not off-set rehabilitation and operating costs.
- **Museum:** Use of the site as a Coast Guard and Life-Saving heritage museum with exhibits and special programming. Museum visits are characterized as short visits, but with a high frequency of visitors. With frequent boat shuttling a necessity, transportation costs would likely exceed any operating revenues. Impacts to the Piping Plover from inadequately supervised visitors could be high.
- **Restaurant:** use of the station house and/or boathouse as a restaurant. As with the other alternatives, while this is physically feasible, transportation costs and potential impacts to the Piping Plover make this alternative undesirable.



Camping on the beach.

G. Summary Matrix of Impacts of Alternatives

	Alternative A: No-Action	Alternative B: Rehabilitate for Adaptive Use	Alternative C: Relocation	Alternative D: Demolition
Description	Maintain current management practices of stabilization and minimal rehabilitation with occasional short-term active use such as housing for visiting researchers and as storage.	Rehabilitate to accommodate a range of uses that fall under environmental research and education.	Relocate the Coast Guard Station buildings off of Assateague Island.	Demolish structures, rehabilitate the site and manage as a natural landscape.
Resource Treatment	Maintain in current condition.	Rehabilitate for adaptive use using Secretary of Interior Standards.	Relocate all structures and rehabilitate site.	Demolish and remove.
Cultural Resources (NEPA impact/106 effect)				
Historic Structures	minor long-term adverse/no adverse effect	moderate long-term beneficial/no adverse effect	major long-term adverse/adverse effect	major permanent adverse/adverse effect
Cultural Landscapes	moderate long-term adverse/no adverse effect	moderate long-term beneficial/no adverse effect	major long-term adverse/adverse effect	major permanent adverse/adverse effect
Archeological Resources: Station Complex	negligible to minor long-term beneficial/no adverse effect/no adverse effect	minor short-term adverse/no adverse effect/no adverse effect	During relocation: moderate short-term adverse/adverse effect After relocation: minor to moderate long-term beneficial/no adverse effect	minor long-term beneficial/no adverse effect
Seaboard Ruin	minor long-term beneficial/no adverse effect	minor long-term beneficial/no adverse effect	minor long-term adverse/no adverse effect	minor long-term adverse/no adverse effect

	Alternative A: No-Action	Alternative B: Rehabilitate for Adaptive Use	Alternative C: Relocation	Alternative D: Demolition
Natural & Ecological Resources				
Vegetation	negligible	During rehabilitation: minor short-term adverse After rehabilitation: negligible	During relocation: moderate short-term adverse After relocation: minor to moderate long-term positive	moderate long-term beneficial
Wildlife & Aquatic Life	negligible to wildlife negligible to aquatic life	During rehabilitation: moderate short-term adverse to wildlife negligible to aquatic life After rehabilitation: minor long-term adverse to wildlife negligible to aquatic life	During relocation: moderate short-term adverse to wildlife minor short-term adverse to aquatic life After relocation: moderate long-term beneficial to wildlife negligible long-term to aquatic life	During demolition: moderate short-term adverse to wildlife minor short-term adverse to aquatic life After demolition: moderate long-term beneficial to wildlife negligible long-term to aquatic life
Rare, Threatened, endangered or Special Concern Species and Their Habitats (NEPA impacts/Section 7 affects)	negligible/no affect	During rehabilitation: negligible to minor short-term adverse/may affect -not likely to adversely affect After rehabilitation: negligible long-term adverse/may affect-not likely to adversely affect	During relocation: negligible to minor short- term adverse/may affect- not likely to adversely affect After relocation: no impact/no affect for long- term with potential for minor-moderate beneficial	no impact/no affect for long-term with potential for minor-moderate beneficial
Water Resources, Wetlands and Water Quality	long-term negligible	minor long-term adverse	During relocation: moderate short-term adverse After relocation: negligible long-term	During demolition: moderate short-term adverse After demolition: negligible long-term
Park Operations & Administration				
Operations & Administration	negligible long-term	moderate long-term beneficial	moderate long-term beneficial	moderate long-term beneficial
Visitor Experience	negligible long-term	moderate long-term beneficial	history-oriented visitor: moderate long-term adverse nature-oriented visitor: moderate long-term beneficial	history-oriented visitor: moderate long-term adverse nature-oriented visitor: moderate long-term beneficial